

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04701 01 OF 03 021745Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 04701

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: UCD PARTY-BUILDING: A DIFFICULT TASK SUAAEZ
CANNOT DELAY MUCH LONGER

REF: 77 MADRID 10075

1. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: WITH SOME IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS (REFTEL), UCD ORGANIZATION, PARTICULARLY AT THE VITAL PROVINCIAL LEVEL, HAS LANGUISHED SINCE THE JUNE 1977 ELECTION. THIS HAS BEEN LARGELY THE RESULT OF NEGLECT BY SUAREZ (YET ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF HIS TENDENCY TO ADDRESS ONE MAJOR PROBLEM AT A TIME). HE HAS EFFECTIVELY PREVENTED ORGANIZATIONAL STRIDES FROM BEING TAKEN BY INTER ALIA KEEPING THE SECRETARY GENERALSHIP VACANT SINCE THE PARTY'S INCEPTION, ENCOURAGING OVERLAPPING RESPONSIBILITY. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MADRID 04701 01 OF 03 021745Z

BILITIES AMONG THE CO-EQUAL MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND LEAVING THE ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARYSHIP OPEN SINCE LATE FEBRUARY.

2. BUT PARTY LEADERS, VIEWING UCD'S COHESION AND ELECTORAL SUCCESS AS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY TO THEIR PARTISAN FORTUNES BUT TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF SPANISH DEMOCRACY, HAVE BEGUN

IN RECENT WEEKS TO EMIT EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN OVER UCD'S ORGANIZATIONAL DRIFT, PARTICULARLY AS A RESULT OF SERIOUS INTERNAL SQUABBLING IN ITS VALENCIA AND CANARIES ORGANIZATIONS AND ELSEWHERE, AND MORE RECENTLY BY ANOTHER LAPSE IN UCD PARLIAMENTARY DISCIPLINE. AS A RESULT, SUAREZ HAS REPORTED ACCEPTED THE NECESSITY OF GETTING A GRIP ON THE PARTY-BUILDING PROBLEM, STARTING WITH REORGANIZING THE NATIONAL UCD LEADERSHIP TO PROVIDE A CENTRAL PARTY DECISIONMAKER AND RESTORE LOST MOMENTUM. HE IS EXPECTED TO NAME SOON AN INTERIM SECRETARY GENERAL, ORGANIZATION SECRETARY OR "COORDINATOR" TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT PREPARATIONS FOR UCD'S LONG DELAYED "CONSTITUENT" CONGRESS, AND TO RUN THE PARTY UNTIL THAT CONGRESS PRODUCES AN ELECTED LEADERSHIP AND CONSENSUS PROGRAM. SUCH A MOVE BY SUAREZ WOULD BE THE IMPERATIVE FIRST STEP TOWARD PUTTING UCD'S ORGANIZATIONAL HOUSE IN ORDER, AN UNAVOIDABLE BUT BY NO MEANS EASY TASK INVOLVING BALANCING DIVERGENT CONCEPTIONS OF WHAT THE PARTY SHOULD BE, SYNTHESIZING THE INTERESTS OF INTERNAL UCD TENDENCIES, AND INTEGRATING COMPETING PERSONAL AMBITIONS. THE CLOCK IS RUNNING ON UCD, BUT IF SUAREZ CHOOSES THE RIGHT MEN, AND EMPOWERS THEM TO GET THE JOB DONE, BOTH THE TIME AND THE RESOURCES APPEAR TO BE AVAILABLE TO COMPLETE THE TASK.

END SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

3. SINCE THE VARIOUS POLITICAL COMPONENTS OF UCD MOVED
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PAGE 03 MADRID 04701 01 OF 03 021745Z

LATE LAST YEAR TO RENOUNCE THEIR INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL IDENTITIES AND TO INTEGRATE THEMSELVES INTO A UNIFIED PARTY (REFTEL), UCD LEADERS OF EVERY HUE HAVE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING THE ORGANIZATION OF THEIR CENTER-STRADDLING PARTY. THEY AGREE THAT THIS MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED NOT JUST TO ENSURE THEIR OWN PARTISAN POLITICAL FUTURES, BUT ALSO TO SECURE SPANISH DEMOCRACY GENERALLY, BY PREVENTING THE POLARIZATION OF SPANISH POLITICS INTO RIGHT AND LEFT BLOCS AND BY ENSURING THE CENTER WILL CONTINUE TO GOVERN UNTIL THE PSOE HAS, IN THEIR VIEW, MATURED SUFFICIENTLY TO BE AN EFFECTIVE, RESPONSIBLE GOVERNING ALTERNATIVE.

4. BUT THESE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY LITTLE NOTICEABLE PROGRESS, AND IN FACT THE ALL-IMPORTANT PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN LEFT ALMOST ENTIRELY TO THE DEVICES OF UCD'S RESPECTIVE PROVINCIAL DEPUTIES AND SENATORS, WHO COLLECTIVELY HAVE DEMONSTRATED LITTLE ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERTISE AND APPEAR MORE INTENT ON SECURING THEIR OWN POLITICAL LONGEVITY. AT LEAST PARTLY BECAUSE SUPRA-PROVINCIAL BODIES HAVE TO BE FORMED BECAUSE OF THE REGIONAL PRE-AUTONOMY PROCESS,

AMBITIOUS MEMBERS OF THE UCD NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND POLITICAL MINISTERS HAVE ALSO BECOME ACTIVE ON THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL, IN SOME CASES SHOWING MORE INTEREST IN PLACING THEIR OWN SUPPORTERS IN PROVINCIAL PARTY POSTS THAN IN SHORING UP THE PARTY TO DEAL WITH EXTRAMURAL ELECTORAL CHALLENGES.

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04701 02 OF 03 021809Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MADRID 04701

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

5. IN THE RESULTANT DRIFT, FUND RAISING HAS GROUND TO A HALT AND RECRUITMENT OF CADRES AND OF PRESTIGIOUS FIGURES OUTSIDE THE PARTY HAS BEEN GIVEN LITTLE ATTENTION. IN SOME AREAS, FURTHERMORE (MOST NOTABLY GALICIA, VALENCIA, THE CANARIES, AND EXTREMADURA), SERIOUS INTERNAL HAGGLING, GENERALLY PITTING CONSERVATIVES AGAINST PROGRESSIVES, HAS BROKEN OUT INTO PUBLIC BATTLES AND SOME DEFECTIONS.

6. THE LACK OF DIRECTION AT THE TOP, WHICH HAS RESULTED IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL MALAISE FOSTERING THIS UNTOWARD WRANGLING IS NOWHERE MORE EVIDENT THAN AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL ITSELF, WHERE:

--THE PARTY, WHICH HAS NEVER HAD A SECRETARY GENERAL,

ALSO HAS BEEN WITHOUT A SECRETARY FOR ORGANIZATION SINCE
THEN-SECRETARY SANCHEZ-TERAN WAS NAMED TRANSPORTATION
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PAGE 02 MADRID 04701 02 OF 03 021809Z

MINISTER IN LATE FEBRUARY. THE DUAL LACK, REFLECTING
SUAREZ' CLEAR INTENTION OF KEEPING HIMSELF THE SOLE CENTRAL
DECISION-MAKER, HAS BROUGHT WHAT WERE AT BEST MODEST ORGAN-
IZATIONAL INITIATIVES TO A COMPLETE HALT, INDICATING THE
LOW PRIORITY SUAREZ ASSIGNED THE TASK.

--UCD'S "CONSTITUENT" CONGRESS HAS REPEATEDLY BEEN NUT
OFF, DEPRIVING THE PARTY OF THE OPPORTUNITY BETTER TO
SYNTHESIZE VARYING INTERNAL VIEWS AND TO GIVE THE MEMBER-
SHIP A GREATER SENSE OF PARTICIPATION. THE CONGRESS, WHEN
IT DOES TAKE PLACE, SHOULD EQUIP THE UCD WITH A DEMOCRATIC-
ALLY ELECTED--AND THEREFORE MORE LEGITIMATE--LEADERSHIP
WHICH TO ADDRESS THE NATION. IT WILL ALSO GIVE ORGANIZ-
TIONAL EFFORTS A NEEDED FOCUS AND SHOT IN THE ARM.

7. IT HAS BEEN CLEAR ALL ALONG THAT EFFECTIVE PARTY-
BUILDING DEPENDED ULTIMATELY ON SUAREZ,BUT HIS DEMONSTRATED
RELUCTANCE TO DELEGATE POWER IN GOVT SHOWS WITHIN UCD AS
WELL. AT THE ROOT OF HIS SLOWNESS TO PLACE UCD PARTY-
BUILDING EFFORTS IN MOTION MAY BE A COMBINATION OF THAT
RELUCTANCE TO DELEGATE, THE SIMPLE IMPOSSIBILITY FOR ONE
MAN TO DO EVERYTHING AT ONCE, THE PRIORITY GIVEN TO ACHIEV-
ING A CONSTITUTION AND STABILIZING THE ECONOMY, THE UNCER-
TAINTY ABOUT JUST WHAT KIND OF PARTY HE WANTS. MOREOVER,
SUAREZ AND SUCH CLOSE ADVISORS AS SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
ABRIL AND INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA, WHOSE POLITICAL
FORMATION TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE FRANCO REGIME, MAY NOT FULLY
APPRECIATE THE NEED FOR A WELL-STRUCTURED PARTY, PREFER-
RING INSTEAD TO DEPEND ON THE RESOURCES OF POWER SUCH AS
THE INTERIOR MINISTRY.

8. THE LACK OF AGREEMENT ON WHAT THE PARTY SHOULD LOOK
LIKE (COMBINED WITH THE ABSENCE OF BQBPDPRECTION FROM
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PAGE 03 MADRID 04701 02 OF 03 021809Z

SUAREZ HIMSELF) APPEARS TO BE AN IMMORTANT REASON FOR
THE DELAY IN GETTING ON WITH THE TASK OF PUTTING UCD
TOGETHER FROM THE GROUND UP. SOME UCD LEADERS, SUCH AS
ELECTIONS CHIEF ARTURO MOYA, CONSIDER IT IMPERATIVE THAT
UCD BE SOMETHING OF A MASS PARTY,WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF
DUES-PAYING "MILITANTS", A HIGHLY ELABORATED PARTY
STRUCTURE, AND A STRONG, CONTINUING INSTITUTIONAL PRESENCE

AT LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS. MOST UCD LEADERS, HOWEVER, SEEM TO AGREE (WITH DIFFERENT NUANCES) THAT THE PARTY ORGANIZATION MUST PRIMARILY BE AN ELECTORAL MACHINE, A CADRE PARTY WITH A MODEST LEVEL OF MILITANCY, BUT ENDOWED WITH A RESPECTED LOCAL, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WHICH CAN MAINTAIN THE PARTY'S PRESENCE, RECRUIT AND RAISE FUNDS EFFECTIVELY, CRANK UP THE WELL-OILED ELECTORAL MACHINERY, AND GET OUT THE VOTE AS NEEDED.

9. THIS LATTER CONCEPTION APPEARS TO BE ENDORSED BY SUAREZ AND SHARED BY MANY UCD LEADERS WHO HAVE NO VESTED INTEREST IN A TAME PARTY ORGANIZATION, BUT WHO ARE SENSITIZED TO THE NEED FOR UCD EFFECTIVELY TO BRACKET A FAIRLY BROAD RANGE OF POLITICAL OPINION IN A PART OF THE SPECTRUM--THE CENTER--WHICH DOES NOT SHARE THE LEFT'S RESPONSIVENESS TO MASS PARTY APPEALS AND WHICH DECIDES ITS VOTE ON THE BASIS OF PRAGMATISM AND EFFECTIVENESS, NOT IDEOLOGY. THEY FEEL A CERTAIN LACK OF POLITICAL DEFINITION WITHIN UCD IS NOT ONLY ADVANTAGEOUS, BUT NECESSARY TO EASING THE TASK OF BLURRING INTERNAL BOUNDARIES AND EXTERNAL BORDERS. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE NEED

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04701 03 OF 03 021807Z
ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 MADRID 04701

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

FOR IMPROVED ORGANIZATION, THEY CONSIDER THE KEY ISSUE TO BE THE INCUMBENT GOVT'S PERFORMANCE AND ITS ABILITY TO DEFEND AND SELL THAT PERFORMANCE TO THE ELECTORATE.

10. WHILE MOYA AND SOME OTHERS BELIEVE THE SNAIL'S PACE OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT IS ALREADY PREJUDICING UCD'S FUTURE, MOST BELIEVE THERE IS AMPLE TIME TO GET THE NECESSARY DONE BEFORE THE NEXT ELECTION, AS LONG AS SUAREZ ADDRESSES HIMSELF SERIOUSLY TO THE QUESTION SOON. THEY DO NOT EXPECT--OR DESIRE--THAT HE PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THE PROCESS, BUT THEY KNOW IT CANNOT BEGIN WITHOUT HIS BLESSING, NOR SUCCEED UNLESS HE PLACES IN CHARGE MEN WITH BOTH AUTHORITY AND BROAD ACCEPTABILITY.

11. MOST UCD AND GOVT FIGURES WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN RECENTLY HAVE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE PRIME
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PAGE 02 MADRID 04701 03 OF 03 021807Z

MINISTER HAS COME AROUND ON THE QUESTION, HIS RESISTANCE OVERCOME BY SUCH POLITICAL REALITIES AS THE OBVIOUS INTERNAL SQUABBLING AND THE UNIFICATION OF THE SOCIALIST PSOE AND PSP. INDEED SUAREZ HAS JUST BEEN QUOTED AS SUGGESTING JUSTICE MINISTER LANDELINO LAVILLA FOR THE POSITION OF "COORDINATOR" PROVIDED LAVILLA OBTAINED THE NECESSARY SUPPORT. (WE HAVE OTHER INDICATIONS LAVILLA WAS TO GET THE NOD; OTHER RUMORED CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN MARTIN VILLA, SANCHEZ-TERAN, PRESIDENCY MINISTER OTERO, AND SECGEN FOR CORTES RELATIONS ARIAS SALGADO.)

12. NAMING A "COORDINATOR" WOULD BE THE NECESSARY FIRST STEP TOWARD PUTTING UCD'S HOUSE IN ORDER, BUT IT WOULD BY NO MEANS GUARANTEE THE SUCCESS OF THE EFFORT, WHICH WILL BE NO EASY TASK. UCD CONTAINS MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF COMPETING AMBITIONS, EASILY BRUISED EGOS, POLITICAL OPPORTUNISTS, FREE SPIRITS AND INTRAMURAL CRITICS, ALL OF WHOM HAVE TO BE HANDLED CAREFULLY.. BUT THIS JUST MAKES IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT THAT THE EFFORT BE MOUNTED, IN ORDER TO BIND THE VARIOUS TENDENCIES MORE CLOSELY TOGETHER, PROVIDE THE NECESSARY LEGITIMATED HIERARCHY, SENSE OF DIRECTION, AND FEELING OF PARTICIPATION AND EFFICACY FOR PARTY MEMBERS, REDUCE TO A MINIMUM INTRAMURAL HAGGLING AND FREE-LANCING, AND IN GENERAL GIVE UCD BOTH THE SINOW AND COHERENCE THAT ARE PRE-CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUING ELECTORAL SUCCESS.

13. BUT MORE IS INVOLVED HERE THAN PARTISAN POLITICAL FORTUNES; UCD'S COHESIVENESS ALSO CAN BE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF SPANISH DEMOCRACY. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT ENTIRELY SHARE MOYA'S PESSIMISTIC VIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE OF ORGANIZATIONAL PLAY AND THE DISTANCE TO BE

TRAVELED, IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT UCD DOES HAVE CON-
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PAGE 03 MADRID 04701 03 OF 03 021807Z

SIDERABLE ORGANIZATIONAL WORK TO ACCOMPLISH AND THE CLOCK
IS RUNNING. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INCREASINGLY CLEAR
SIGNS ARE THAT SUAREZ HAD FOCUSED ON THE PROBLEM AND WILL
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